



THE
CONNOISSEUR.

By Mr. T O W N,

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Poscentes vario multum diversa palato. HOR.



HAVE selected the following letters from a great number which I have lately been favoured with from unknown correspondents; and as they both relate nearly to the same subject, I shall without further preface submit them to the public.

To Mr. T O W N.

S I R,

WHEN you was got into *White's*, I was in hopes that you would not have confin'd yourself merely to the gaming-table, but have given us an account of the entertainment at their ordinaries. A bill of fare from thence would have been full as diverting to your readers

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as the laws of the game, or a list of their bets. These gentlemen, we are told, are no less adepts in the science of Eating than of Gaming; and as *Hoyle* has reduc'd the latter into a new and complete system, I could wish that their cook (who to be sure is a *Frenchman*) would also oblige the world by a treatise on the Art and Mystery of Sauces.

INDEED, Mr. TOWN, it surprizes me that you have so long neglected to make some reflections on the Diet of this great city. Dr. *Martin Lister*, who was universally allowed to be a great *Connoisseur*, and published several learned treatises upon cockle-shells, did not think it beneath him to comment on the works of *Apicius Cælius*, who had collected together many valuable receipts in cookery, as practised by the *Romans*. If you would preserve your papers from the indignity of covering breasts of veal, or wrapping up cutlets *à la Maintenon*, I would advise you to lard them now and then with the ragouts of *Heliogabalus*, or a parallel between our modern soups and the *Lacedæmonian* black broth. Your works might then be universally read, from the mistress in the parlour down to the cookmaid and scullion.

IT is absolutely necessary for people of all tempers, complexions, persuasions, habits and stations of life, however they may differ in other particulars, to concur in the grand article of Eating; and as the humours of the body arise from the food we take in, the dispositions of the mind seem to bear an equal resemblance to our places of refreshment. You have already taken a review of our several coffee-houses; and I wish you would proceed to delineate the different characters that are to be found in our taverns and chop-houses. A friend of mine always judges of a man of taste and fashion, by asking who is his peruke-maker, or his taylor? Upon the same principles, when I would form a just opinion
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any man's temper and inclinations, I always enquire, where does he dine?

THE difference between the taverns near *St. James's* and those about the *'Change* consists not so much in the costliness as the substance of their viands. The round-bellied alderman, who breathes the foggy air of the city, requires a more solid diet than the high kickshaws of our meagre persons of quality. My Lord, or Sir *John*, after having whiled away an hour or two at the Parliament-house, drive to the *Star and Garter* to regale on Macaroni, or 'pidle with an Ortolan; while the merchant, who has plodded all the morning in the Alley, sits down to a Turtle-Feast at the *Crown* or the *King's Arms*, and crams himself with Calipash and Calipee. As the city taverns are appropriated to men of business, who drive bargains for thousands over their morning's gill, the taverns about the court are generally filled with an insipid race of mortals who have nothing to do. Among these you may see most of our young men of fashion and young officers of the guards, who meet at these places to shew the elegance of their taste by the expensiveness of their dinner; and I know an Ensign with scarce any income but his commission, who prides himself on keeping the best company, and throws down more than a week's pay for his reckoning.

THE taverns about the purlieus of *Covent-Garden* are dedicated to *Venus* as well as *Ceres* and *Liber*; and you may frequently see the jolly messmates of both sexes go in and come out in couples, like the clean and unclean beasts in *Noah's ark*. These houses are equally indebted for their support to the Cook and that worthy personage whom they have dignified with the title of Pimp. These gentlemen contrive to play into each other's hands: The first by his
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high soups and rich sauces prepares the way for the occupation of the other, who having reduced the patient by a proper exercise of his art, returns him back again to go through the same regimen as before. We may therefore suppose that the culinary arts are no less studied here than at *White's* or *Pontac's*. True geniuses in Eating will continually strike out new improvements; but I dare say neither *Braund* nor *Lebeck* ever made up a more extraordinary dish than I once remember at the *Castle*. Some bloods being in company with a celebrated *fille de joye*, one of them pulled off her shoe, and in excess of gallantry filled it with Champagne, and drank it off to her health: in this delicious draught he was immediately pledged by the rest; and then, to carry the compliment still further, he ordered it to be dressed, and served up for supper. The cook set himself seriously to work upon it: He pulled the upper part (which was of damask) into fine shreds, and tossed it up in a ragout; minced the sole; cut the wooden heel into very thin slices, fried them in butter, and placed them round the dish for garnish. The company, you may be sure, testified their affection for the lady by eating very heartily of this exquisite *impromptu*; and as this transaction happened just after the *French King* had taken a cobbler's daughter for his mistress, *Tom Pierce* (who has the stile as well as art of a *French cook*) in his bill politely called it, in honour of her name, *De soulier à la Murphy*.

TAVERNS, Mr. TOWN, seem contrived for the promoting of luxury; while the humbler Chop-houses are designed only to satisfy the ordinary cravings of nature. Yet at these you may meet with a variety of characters: at *Dolly's* and *Horseman's* you commonly see the hearty lovers of a beef-steak and gill ale; and at *Betty's* and the chop-houses about the Inns of Court, a pretty maid is as inviting

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as the provisions. In these common refectories you may always find the jemmy attorney's clerk, the prim curate, the walking physician, the shabby valet de chambre upon board wages, and the foreign count or marquis in dishabille, who has refused to dine with a duke or an ambassador. At a little eating-house in a dark alley behind the 'Change I once saw a grave citizen, worth a plumb, order a two-penny mcs of broth with a boiled chop in it: when it was brought him, he scooped the crumb out of a half-penny roll, and soaked it in the porridge for his present meal; then carefully placing the chop between the upper and under crust, he wrapped it up in a checked handkerchief, and carried it off for the morrow's repast.

I SHALL leave it to you, sir, to make further reflections on this subject, and should be glad to dine with you at any tavern, dive with you into any cellar, take a beef-steak in *Ivy-lane*, a mutton-chop behind *St. Clement's*, or, if you chuse it, an extempore sausage or black-pudding over the farthing fries at *Moor-Fields* or the *Horse-Guards*.

Your humble servant,

Pye-Corner, May 28.

T. SAVOURY.

Mr. TOWN!

BY Jove it is a shame, a burning shame, to see the honour of *England*, the glory of our nation, the greatest pillar of life, ROAST BEEF, utterly banished from our tables. This evil, like many others, has been growing upon us by degrees: it was begun by wickedly placing the Beef upon a side table, and screening it by a parcel of queue-tailed fellows in laced waistcoats. However, the odorous effluvia generally affected the smell of every true *Briton* in the room. The butler was fatigued with carving: the master of the house grew pale, and sickened at the sight of those juicy collops of fat and lean that came swimming in gravy

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and smoking most deliciously under our nostrils. Other methods therefore were to be pursued. The Beef was still served up, but it was brought up cold. It was put upon a table in the darkest part of the room, and immured between four walls formed artificially by the servants with the hats of the company. When the jellies and the slip-flops were coming in, the Beef was carried off in as secret a manner as if it had gone through the ceremonies of concoction. But still, sir, under all these disadvantages we had a chance of getting a slice as it passed by. Now alas! it is not suffered to come up stairs. I dare say it is generally banished from the steward's table; nor do I suppose that the powdered footmen will touch it, for fear of dawbing their ruffles. So that the dish that was served up to the royal tables, the dish that was the breakfast of Queen *Elizabeth* and her maids of honour, the dish that received the dignity of knighthood from King *James* the First, is now become the food only of scullions and stable-boys. In what words can I vent my resentment upon this occasion? especially when I reflect that innovations seldom come alone. Toasted cheese is already buried in rammekins: plumb-porridge has been long banished: I tremble for plumb-pudding. May we not live to see a leg of pork detested as carrion? and a shoulder of mutton avoided as if it were horse-flesh? Our only hopes are in the Clergy, and in the Beef-steak Club. The former still preserve, and probably will preserve, the rectitude of their appetites; and will do justice to Beef, wherever they find it. The latter (who are composed of the most ingenious artists in the kingdom) meet every Saturday in a noble room at the top of *Covent-Garden* theatre, and never suffer any dish except Beef-steaks to appear. These indeed are most glorious examples: but what alas! are the weak endeavours of a few to oppose the daily inroads of fricassees and soup-maigres? This, Mr. Town, is a national concern, as it may prove more destructive to Beef than the distemper among the horned cattle: and should the modish aversion against rumps and sirloins continue, it will be absolutely necessary to enforce the love of Beef by act of parliament. Yours,

GOLIAH ENGLISH.